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THE BIAS OF PATRIOTISM.

I.

Bias is that attribute of the mind which causes it to accept as true, on relatively slight evidence, that which agrees with its sympathies, and to reject or minimise that which is opposed to its sympathies, although the evidence be relatively strong. Of all the characteristics of the human mind, this is, perhaps, the most constant; and yet, striking as it is in others, of its existence in ourselves we are but faintly conscious. Each individual may be said to enter the world obliquely; he is the center or meeting point of forces, all tending to distort his outlook upon the universe of which he is part. First, there are those strongest and most comprehensive of all forms of bias, the bias of self and the bias of sex. On the social side there are the sympathies which draw the individual towards a certain class; which identify his interests with those of a certain profession or trade, a certain family, town, district, or country. On the intellectual side he is impelled towards certain forms of education, certain schools of thought, certain ideals of culture, certain political or social creeds. On the religious side he may accept with the utmost avidity everything which favours a certain belief or doctrine, or may have a strong natural bent towards some phase of agnosticism. And so on through all branches of literature and art.

No one would contend for a moment that these leanings were in themselves bad. It may be safely asserted that without them we should have no enthusiasm, no heroism, possibly, also, very little character. If we were to eliminate bias, we should at the same time destroy the element which gives piquancy and zest to life, for it is the tendency to see things wrongly, and not as they really are, which is one of the prime causes of interest. In the views of strongly biased people, there is always something picturesque and charming. It is thus that personality reveals itself. A man's emotions are allowed to emphasise, to colour his case, without exciting in us any repugnance; we are content to listen and enjoy. We may say, then, that inasmuch as bias gives variety to life, it is good. It quickens the intelligence, fires the imagination, calls forth unsuspected powers.

It is only when we approach the problem of the value and function of truth, that the really mischievous side of bias comes into view. Few would assert that to know the exact truth, under all circumstances, is either desirable, or would be conducive to the greatest happiness. To see things and people precisely as they are is happily not possible to understandings such as ours; but if it were, it is clear that some of the greatest joys of life would be gone. How far happiness depends upon the purest illusion is a perfectly legitimate subject of philosophic inquiry. But ignorance, even if sometimes conducive to bliss, is far oftener the cause of innumerable forms of suffering; and for the purpose of the present inquiry, it must be assumed that it is in the direction of greater knowledge that we must look for the true development and happiness of mankind. Now the sum of truths that it is possible for the individual to discover for himself, is relatively very small. In the vast majority of cases, they are limited to the ordinary facts of everyday life. The truths which relate to other lives, other things and times, pass into his experience through the minds of other men. Human life being at best a mere flash, and the sum of knowledge practically infinite, the utmost that any single mind can accomplish is to make a hasty selection. Now if all knowledge

could be reduced to the condition of science, the effect of bias would be no more serious than the production of an army of specialists, each with an exaggerated view of the importance of his own department, but each disseminating some small portion of recognized truth. But the knowledge which is *not* "reasoned and classified," and the conclusions which are waiting for verification, form, and will probably always form, the main object of interest to the ordinary mind. In every department of thought we are confronted with opinions having all the weight of an ill-defined authority, which are greatly divergent, and often diametrically opposed. The position of the lay mind is thus one of difficulty and responsibility. Consciously or unconsciously it will select, and it is of much importance to determine on what principle this selection is to be made. Are we honestly desirous of getting hold of the truth—or what must correspond to the truth in this world in which the absolute is unattainable; or is the acquisition of truth to be regarded as subordinate to the agreeable process of having our existing beliefs confirmed? It is owing to the baneful influences of bias, that the essential difference of these two positions is not clearly seen. As a consequence the progress of knowledge, despite the more perfect arrangement for its dissemination, is retarded. Brilliantly expressed errors, cunning appeals to the affections, mistaken zeal, make a long fight against a prosaic truth. Energy is wasted in endless correction, and unwelcome discoveries are ignored or suppressed.

Bias is an affair of feeling, and it would be absurd to expect, even in an ideal society, an invariable enthusiasm for pure truth. As a practical question, all that may be hoped for is to bring home to the average mind a more or less clear *consciousness* of bias. Under ordinary circumstances, this quickened consciousness is manifested by a certain difference in attitude towards supposed authority on debatable questions. It is recognized that here also bias is at work. The conclusions towards which the sympathies of the teacher lead him are subjected to close scrutiny, and conversely the admissions made with evident reluctance are freely accepted.

The exposition is taken in strict connection with the interests, experience, and character of the expositor. This, of course, is what everyone feels to be the common-sense view, and yet there are probably few more frequent sources of error and confusion than just this failure to consider the precise strength and direction of the feeling of the individual teacher, and how far it will be likely to carry him. Apart from this consideration, the testimony is of little value. In the elucidation of truth, evidence and personality cannot be separated. It is only thus that there may be felt the necessity of some standard in which the element of bias is absent, in which a *consensus* of those familiar with the evidence takes the place of personal opinion. With a keener watchfulness as to the workings of bias, there arises a higher appreciation of the judicial faculty and a corresponding depreciation of simple advocacy; it is seen that in order to establish a truth, it is not necessary to over-state it, that a right judgment is more likely to be obtained from attempts at impartial treatment, than from intentionally one-sided views.

The question as to how far all knowledge is relative is, of course, beyond the range of this paper. It must be here assumed that to those sufficiently in earnest, and having the necessary opportunities, the truth is attainable. Our immediate concern, therefore, is not with truth itself, but with the mental attitude in regard to it. Given a community the members of which are from various causes indifferent in this respect, and all the enthusiasm and skill of which they are capable will serve but to glorify error, and obscure the benefits of more accurate knowledge

But bias is not only individual, but collective; it is in the *group* that its most characteristic features are observed. The larger the group, the less conscious is it of its peculiar bias. Let us readily admit the inspiration that proceeds from numbers. There is no type of mind, however cold or unsympathetic, which is not largely sustained by the encouragement of kindred minds; as an influence in the lives of teachers and reformers, its power may scarcely be over-estimated. But let us not fall into the error of supposing that there is an

absolutely necessary connection between numbers and infallibility. We cannot get at the truth by a mere process of counting heads. The most that can be said is that the beliefs of groups are more likely to have in them an element of truth than the beliefs of the individuals of which the group is composed. But there is still to be taken into account the beliefs outside the group. The result of the bringing together of individuals having similar opinions is to augment feeling, to enhance rather than dispel prejudice, to encourage rather than remove bias. If the individuals of the group are, in the main, right, the feeling of sympathy will cause them to push their principles to an unwarrantable extreme. If in the main they are wrong, the same feeling will cause them to insist upon the least assailable points of their own creed, and enlarge upon the weaknesses of beliefs to which they are opposed. Sympathy is often stronger than truth. The path of error is easy by way of companionship. There is no opinion or belief, however unjustifiable, which is not strengthened by the discovery that it is shared by another mind; and ideas which the individual would be afraid, or even ashamed to express, have quite a different aspect when presented boldly in a new form.

Thus the part played by the more impulsive spirits of a group is quite out of proportion to the value of their counsel. The process is familiar enough. The man who knows the least is the most easily convinced. For him the golden mean has no charms. He has little sympathy with the attitude of those who confess to uncertainty from lack of data, still less with those who candidly admit a change of belief. What he requires are clear, simple, decided views, warmly and pointedly expressed. This man of little knowledge and strong convictions will almost invariably be found in the ranks of the most demonstrative, setting the emotional pace of the group—a pace which so often ends in sharp reaction. He it is who offers the strongest temptation to over-statement, to unfairness, and to all the weaknesses associated with the element of personality. Thus do we realise the important part played by numbers. The bias of the individual is patent

to many; that of the group may be seen with equal clearness only by those outside it.

Now the group with which the present investigation is concerned is almost the largest, and certainly the most important of all the groups composing modern civilised society. Its bias is the most unconscious, and therefore the most difficult to appraise, the most difficult to attack. If no man is free from bias, from this form he is least likely of all to be free. Hence on such a subject there can never be any approach to finality, the knowledge of those within and those without the group varies too widely. In the very nature of the case we look in vain for any safe guide, any fixed standard of what, under the circumstances is true or false, right or wrong. Why, then, it may be asked, should we essay a task which presents so many elements of uncertainty, whose results cannot be either definite or conclusive? I think here, as in the case of so many of the deeper problems of life, the end is of less importance than the means. In the most fundamental of all beliefs there is an element of indefiniteness, if not of contradiction, yet it is just these beliefs which have most profoundly influenced human conduct in all ages. Thus the absence of fixed criteria is no valid objection to our enquiry. In order to know a thing, it is not necessary to measure it; the mere recognition that it exists, that it has certain broadly marked characteristics, that its influence is felt in certain directions is knowledge often of vital importance.

II.

What is patriotism? The apparently simple love of the fatherland is really a very complex sentiment. There is first the simple affection for the native speech. Whether or not we agree with Freeman and Max Nordau that language may be taken as a rough test of nationality, it is obvious that by no other means is the sense of kinship so strongly brought home, whilst a difference in speech amongst an otherwise united people can only be overcome by a community of interests which, however powerful, is never absolute. It is not

that a people *deliberately* loves its speech as the result of a conscious choice in which their own mode of expression is known to be superior to that of others. To the vast majority of mankind such a process is altogether unknown. The affection must be classed with the special instincts, and it has all the force of a purely natural impulse. Playing a leading part in the acquisition of all that belongs to the thought of a people, both past and present, language is thus the distinctive feature which, in any process of absorption, is the last to disappear. The joys, sorrows, struggles, and triumphs of a people are indissolubly associated with its native speech, which in this way becomes invested with a magic power, giving its possessors a certain reserve of strength as against the rest of the world.

There is next the affection for the purely physical surroundings. In its most primitive form, the feeling does not reach much beyond the immediate district in which a man has been brought up, every detail of which is so interwoven with his experience as to enter into his personality. The sentiment undergoes modification with the increase in the facilities for locomotion, particularly amongst town-dwellers, the affection for the native district giving place to a similar sentiment towards more remote localities, which from various causes become more attractive. This love of the soil, of the native climate, mountains, rivers, fields, lanes, trees, flowers, and so forth, remains a sentiment at once real and lasting, affecting one's judgment regarding the physical features of other lands.

Thirdly, there is the affection inspired by history. Emerging from the mists of tradition, we find amongst every people carefully preserved records of national achievements. As until comparatively recent times, the only way in which a people could distinguish itself was in war, the prominent feature in all these records is prowess in arms. Being in the main the work of native chroniclers, the deeds are set forth with a loving thoroughness which appeals strongly to the national temper. Accordingly, whatever the actual course of a people's history may have been, they always find

in it abundant material for exciting their admiration and sympathy. Also largely inspired by history, we have that phase of the patriotic sentiment which is called forth by the institutions, laws, and customs of a country—social, political, and religious. In the evolution of these the best energy of a people is absorbed. In this way is brought home to a race its obligation to past generations, and thus arises that continuity of sentiment, which marks the growth of national thought and character.

Finally there is the affection inspired by great men—warriors, statesmen, poets, philosophers, and artists. Whatever view may be taken of the “great man” theory of history, it must be recognised that in its great men the genius of a race finds its most striking and adequate expression. Amongst the different peoples of the world there is the widest difference of ideals; there is a very wide difference in the ideals of the same people in different ages. But whatever standard is observed we have, in the attribute of greatness, the best that the race has to offer. It follows, therefore, that the admiration always evoked by the display of exceptional gifts, will become reflected in the people amongst whom they appear as a feeling of national gratification or pride. In the mind of each individual there is a vague consciousness that he is entitled to some share of the credit in producing the great ones of his own country. He feels that the possibilities of the race have a new significance for him. In this way does he become bound to the race by a sentiment which appeals to some of the best faculties of his nature. Through great men the love of kindred is intensified; it is also refined and elevated, and may thus claim a justification on grounds other than those pertaining to mere geographical position or purely instinctive feeling.

In all these ways then is the sentiment of patriotism manifested. It is not, of course, suggested that in all countries the part played by these various emotions is of the same relative importance. For instance, the love of physical surroundings—the *pays*—is very fully developed in France, whilst in England and America—the great traveling nations

—the sentiment is comparatively weak. Similarly in England, the feeling inspired by institutions is relatively much stronger than in Germany, where militarism and closely allied officialism is the dominating feature. It is obvious also that at different periods of a country's history, the strength of the different forces varies greatly. But wherever the patriotic feeling exists it may, I think, be resolved into some such elements as are here indicated. Thus do we find ourselves face to face with a highly complex sentiment. Directly or indirectly, it has to take into account innumerable facts of the most diverse kind, ranging over a very wide area. The ideas, feelings, acts of many individuals are bound up in it. Social movements, presenting problems of great intricacy, and demanding judgment of a high order are based upon it. It is, therefore, unquestionable that in the resulting conduct, there is the fullest scope for error and wrongdoing; and the apparently simple and straightforward nature of the patriotic impulse should not deter us from subjecting it to the closest scrutiny.

III.

But before passing to a closer examination of the bias in question, it will be necessary to recall for the moment, certain features of the development of European civilisation, of which modern patriotism is the outcome. Patriotism, as we understand it to-day, is a sentiment of comparatively recent growth. The feeling corresponding to it, for instance, in Greece and Rome was real enough, but the vast difference in the social conditions both within and without these states, is fatal to the drawing of any analogy that would be helpful at the present time. The conditions which succeeded the decline of the Empire were highly unfavorable to the growth of patriotism. For many centuries, the young and vigorous races of the north strove together for the territories which had been more or less completely subject to Rome. In due course the civilised parts of the continent became parcelled out into duchies, kingdoms, and even empires. But the divisions thus formed were, in the main,

geographical. The unity that existed among confederations of states was little more than a recognition of spheres of influence. Boundaries were ill-defined, languages were unsettled, the races readily transferred their allegiance from one ruler to another. Throughout the feudal period, the ideas, no less than the interests of the people could scarcely have risen above the purely local. On the other hand, there were certain influences at work which tended in a certain sense to unify the whole of the civilised continent; such, for instance, as the use of a common language by the learned of all countries, and the recognition of a common religion, of which latter, the great movement of the Crusades is the most striking manifestation. We seem to recognise the germ of the principle of nationality in the elevation of the local tongues into literary languages; but this was an extremely slow process, occupying in every country several centuries, and then only affecting a section of the people.

When at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Machiavelli declares that he prefers his country to the safety of his soul, we are conscious of an entirely new note in European history. Quite apart from the value of the Machiavellian ideal, we recognise that here is something for which some personal sacrifice may be made. It is evident that certain definite groups of men, with ideas and traditions in common, and associated with certain districts have been formed, and that they are conscious of having a character and destiny apart from the rest of the world. But patriotism is still of slow growth. True there has always been the stimulus derived from the fighting instinct, which caused the inhabitants of different countries to band together against a common foe; and there can be no doubt that this tended greatly to encourage the feeling of nationality, of which, perhaps, the long wars waged between France and England are the best illustration. But it will be seen that patriotism as here understood, though largely influenced by pure antagonism to alien people, embraces much more, and it is this love of country in the fuller sense which was reserved for the nineteenth century.

The nineteenth is pre-eminently the century of nationality. Since 1815 many new races have sprung up, proclaiming through their various tongues their right to recognition as distinct people. From the ruins of the Turkish power in Europe have emerged half a dozen nationalities, Greece, Roumania, Servia, Bulgaria, and others whose independence cannot long be delayed. Hungary has obtained autonomy from Austria. Italy has become a united people. Belgium has separated from Holland. And most important of all, from a political point of view, from thirty-two states, we now hear the single voice of the races of Germany. In other parts of the world, we have the striking advent of America as a world-power, and the rise of Japan. Now this national movement is in a great measure democratic. It is directed not so much against alien people, as against alien governments; it is the assertion by races of the right to work out their own destiny in their own way. In such stages of the national movement, it is obvious that patriotism of the higher kind will be called forth. The feeling at such times is at least co-extensive with the love of freedom, and commands equal admiration. But it is in the later stages of national existence that patriotism shows a tendency to run riot, and here we are met by a curious anomaly.

The great increase in the means of human intercourse that has taken place during the last fifty years, has not been followed by any appreciably better feeling between the nations. Though war is, perhaps, less frequent, we have in its place an animosity which is both chronic and intensely articulate, the far-reaching evils of which are hardly less than those attending actual bloodshed. On the part of all the older states, there is the fear that their existence, or prosperity, or development is imperilled by the aggressive feeling of their neighbors; and the policy of the governing forces in each country is thus to keep alive those evidences of international hostility which, unhappily, it is never difficult to find. Clearly, there is something fundamentally wrong in this phase of the development of modern civilisation. Side by side with an unparalleled advance in all the forms of knowledge which stand

for moral progress, with a marked improvement in the education of the people and a quickening of the general intellect, with a keener appreciation of art and letters, with a softening of manners, and with, at all events, a formal recognition of a higher ethical standard; we have the great groups of mankind known as nations still clinging to the barbarous law that might is right, that the well-being of one group may only be obtained at the expense of another, that the natural relation is one not of amity, but of enmity. The explanation of this strange association of degeneration and development must be sought in the old direction. The arch-enemy of mankind is ignorance, and it is to this sinister influence that all forms of international ill-will, suspicion, and even jealousy, are in the main traceable. In other words, the general progress of mankind is being retarded by the bias of a crude and short-sighted patriotism.

IV.

Now let us look this idea of patriotism squarely in the face. Let us give to it, as a force in individual and social development, all the credit to which it is entitled, but let no fear of hard names turn us aside from an attempt to arrive at a fair estimate of its value. Perhaps the least questionable of all the uses of patriotism is its service to art. Under this influence the æsthetic faculties are stimulated, an entirely distinct sphere is revealed for the exercise of creative thought. It is mainly to this stimulus that we owe all the many forms of national poetry, painting, sculpture; in music, oratory, and imaginative prose writing its influence has been incalculably great. It has been the cause of much æsthetic inspiration, and of still more æsthetic appreciation. It thus introduces a special form of happiness to millions whose thought, apparently, would otherwise have been in this respect torpid. This is a great boon; let it be recorded with due prominence.

Patriotism, also, is one of the strongest incentives to self-sacrifice. For reasons which will be noticed presently, the ground here is not quite so safe, but the proposition as stated

is doubtless substantially true. As a direct cause of the exhibition of physical courage, patriotism, probably, should be accorded the first place. Without enquiring too closely into the nature of this quality, or offering any comparison between the physical and moral varieties of it, we must ungrudgingly concede that it is, to an eminent degree, admirable. In the courage that leads to the sacrifice of life itself, there is something which stirs the soul to its depths. None will deny that such valour must be ranked high among the nobler attributes of human nature.

Admirable, also, is that other form of sacrifice which is chronicled not as death, but as life devoted to the welfare of one's country. With a second caution that the admiration may be qualified by other considerations, we note here the approach of the purest of all forms of patriotism; but it is significant that it is also the least characteristic, and therefore the least aggressive. In ordinary estimation, the greatest patriot would be he who devoted himself most exclusively to his own country, and was indifferent or hostile to others. But it is by no means necessary so to restrict the meaning of the word. The patriotism here spoken of may be only half conscious of the existence of other countries, or may even include their wellbeing in its own. But it is clear that when this stage is reached, we are introducing an entirely new element into the case.

Next may be noted the use of patriotism as a promoter of human sympathy. The consciousness of kindred origin, interests, and aims is a unifying principle of the utmost potency. It is undoubtedly a great corrective of many subtle forms of egoism, lifting the individual out of his immediate circle, and introducing an entirely new set of interests. The individual consciousness thus becomes fuller, richer, more complex; it ascends to a higher plane in the scale of being. There is, of course, no more fundamental emotion of human nature than that of sympathy; to it we owe that *common-sense*—the sense of the common interest—which is the source of some of the strongest enthusiasms and also some of the greatest social pleasures. With certain inevitable reserva-

tions, we may say that anything which stimulates sympathy between the units of society is good; and to this extent the services rendered by patriotism are quite beyond question.

Finally must be acknowledged the function of patriotism as a means of encouraging emulation and rivalry. Where the national reputation is at stake, men and communities are spurred to make efforts which, under ordinary conditions they would regard as futile. Thus is the best of which they are capable brought out; the native talent is specialised and quickened. There is hardly any branch of human activity which may not be affected in this way. It is not necessary to dwell upon the importance of this feature of competition. Other things being equal, the keener it is, the greater the results from the point of view of evolution. It has played a great part in the past, it is destined to play a far greater part in the future, and there seems to be every reason for regarding this international feeling of emulation as, in itself, a strong factor in the progress of civilisation.

Now underlying the view that the influence of patriotism is, in these several ways beneficial, there is one great assumption: that the influence is not opposed to those fundamental principles of right and wrong which are the basis of all ethical truth. Thus, it is only on a most rigorous interpretation of the principle of art for art's sake, that the æsthetic uses of the patriotic spirit may be placed beyond suspicion. None will deny that under the influence of this spirit, the artists of all countries are constantly producing work which, however faithful an expression of their own ideas, is false in fact, base in feeling, and unjust in sentiment. The physical courage in support of one's own country compels admiration, but if the cause happens to be a bad one, the admiration descends sharply to a lower plane—such, for instance, as is evoked by blind obedience, or the sense of unreasoned duty. Lifelong services to one's country may be characterised by habits of deceit, unfairness, or deliberate wrong-doing. The sense of unity of interest may have its inspiration, not so much in mutual well-being, as in common enmity to others. Or the spirit of emulation may be confined to the grosser

instincts of the race, and may thus tend, not towards development, but towards degeneration.

It seems impossible to escape from the conclusion that the problem of the function of patriotism is, at the bottom, a moral problem. It is the moral view, and not the intellectual or the æsthetic, which on an ultimate analysis, will be found to determine the legitimate limits of the patriotic feeling. The only patriotism which may hope to withstand the criticism of the future is that which gives an ever-increasing prominence to the broad principles of ethical truth.

Considering the important part played by patriotism in the history of society, it is remarkable that no serious attempt has been made to define its position. Is it, as is commonly thought, a virtue? Virtue itself is hard to define. There are still to be found some who believe in a sort of unconscious virtue—that it is possible to show moral strength, where there is no temptation against which this strength is exercised. On this view every man could claim unbounded credit for the non-commission of sins to which he had ceased to have, or never had, the slightest inclination. Holding such a belief it is impossible for an individual to get even the roughest measure of his own culpability, whilst of that of his fellows, he cannot form the faintest idea. The only rational view would appear to be that virtue is the moral power which resists temptation to do wrong. Some such conception is necessary to explain the different degrees of culpability of men in different places and at different times, and of the same men at different periods of life and under different circumstances. Temptation and virtue are inseparable.

Now if this principle or anything resembling it be admitted, it is clear that patriotism cannot make good its claim to be ranked among the virtues. Under ordinary conditions, the temptations are all in the opposite direction. There is surely nothing particularly meritorious in cherishing a love for one's native land. Such a feeling is to a great extent instinctive. It may be regarded in most essentials as an extension of that family affection which forms the basis of

all society. The feeling is perfectly normal and natural. It is remarkable only in its absence.

But, it may be urged, it is not so much the sentiment that is in question, as the conduct resulting from it. How shall we describe the conduct of those who have sacrificed their own interests to the good of their country, who have laid down their lives for it? If this is not virtue, where, indeed, are we to look for it? The question is by no means a simple one. It leaves out of account the existence of a possible motive higher than the immediate interest, or good of the country to which one happens to belong. The man who, believing his country to be engaged in a bad cause, yet voluntarily gives his life in its support, may be in some sort a hero, but on strictly moral grounds his conduct cannot be defended. On the other hand, he who sacrifices himself, believing his country to be in the right, is acting under the influence of a motive which is independent of all nationality—the cause of justice. This distinction seems to be vital. How far the purely moral motive is quickened and humanised by the love of country is a psychological question into which it is not necessary to enter. It may even be granted that it is this passion which, in the vast majority of cases, supplies the incentive; but the point to be noted is, that regarded strictly from the ethical point of view, this love is not the determining factor. No matter how weak the national cause may be, resistance to an enemy is always founded upon so-called *rights*; an appeal solely to the love of country would at once excite suspicion, and would be effective only where reason had been quite eclipsed by passion.

The suggestion, therefore, is, that there is no reason to dissociate patriotism from other forms of love; it is simply an emotion. In a great number of cases it never gets beyond the emotional stage. It is often a mere habit of mind which affects our sentiments, gives warmth to our opinions, and excites our interest, but it is not necessarily translated into conduct. When it is so translated, the conduct may be highly virtuous, for there is no limit to the personal sacrifice which may be called forth; but it may be

almost equally vicious, for in the name of patriotism are constantly committed injustice, bloodshed, and oppression. It cannot be too clearly understood that the point of importance is not the possession of the patriotic feeling, but the uses that are made of it.

It follows from the foregoing line of argument that the principle, "My country, right or wrong," is one of pure expediency. It pertains to the gentle art of quarreling. When an appeal to force is once made it is better for everybody—spectators as well as belligerents—to get through with the business as speedily as possible. To try to make war and peace at the same time is foolish; to show two minds to an enemy is to court disaster. Accordingly a nation having once pronounced for war it is expedient that dissentients should be passive or, in the case of extremity, even actively hostile to an enemy. We need not discuss how far such an equivocal proceeding would be necessary in a more perfect state of society; we have simply to admit that, at the present stage of development of human nature in most civilised countries, any greater freedom allowed to opponents of the national policy at such times would add many fresh evils to those already existing.

But this doctrine of "My country, right or wrong" applied to other times than those of actual warfare is irrational and pernicious. Who speaks in the name of the country? The statesmen? History is one long confession of their mistakes. The Governments? The autocratic ones are clearly disqualified; the democratic speak with widely different voices, a few thousand votes converting the yea into nay. The newspaper press? Even in the most democratic countries it is hard to say how far it is disinterested, moreover it works at high pressure, and is content to satisfy the demands of the moment. The people? They are easily carried away by passion; their judgment is but too often hasty and superficial. There is obviously nothing particularly sacred in these interpreters of the nation's needs at critical periods of its history. Taken together they may represent the prevalent opinion, but the loudest voice in

each or all may prove to be wrong. Against all the force of such authority the right of private judgment remains as strong as ever.

The only sense in which "my" country can truly be mine, is that of personal conviction. At such moments it is not a material but an ideal country; it stands for my countrymen, not at their worst, but at their best; not for what they are, but for what I conceive they may be, and ought to be. "My" country is that part of it of which I am proud. If it is to be articulate, it must be so in the persons of those men—irrespective of their number—in whose insight and judgment I have faith. It is the country whose genius I wish to see asserting itself along the lines of its higher evolution; whose conduct should be most in harmony with the best traditions of the race, most likely to be justified by the verdict of an impartial posterity. It is clear that in all this, there is room for the utmost difference of opinion; to no two persons will the best and worst features of national character appear the same. From which it follows that it is both illogical and unjust to set up one ideal of conduct as essentially patriotic, and another, claiming to be founded on the same affection, as essentially the reverse. One fact should be at least evident: opinions formed at the expense of popular favour must have a strong personal foundation. They may, of course, be wrong; but they have been tested. They are at least honest, and represent conscious judgment in the face of difficulty. At times of national excitement there is little hope of such opinion making itself heard, but under normal conditions it furnishes a body of counsel which, in the long run, is to no nation an element of weakness, but of strength.

V.

There can be little doubt that the excessive bias of modern patriotism is in the main due to the backward state of knowledge in certain directions. It is not, of course, suggested that the feeling of patriotism is in itself bad, still less that it is due to ignorance. Patriotism, like all other affections, is largely an affair of temperament, and is clearly

compatible with knowledge of other nations both extensive and profound. But such patriotism is eminently sane, discriminative and chastened; it is the reasonable form of the sentiment which is destined to survive the test of time.

But if ignorance is not the cause of patriotism, it is directly responsible for those obtrusive and uncontrollable forms of it, which set up causes of needless irritation and rancour between different races. The most complete misconceptions still prevail in all civilised countries respecting the feelings, aims, and temperament of the people of other lands. Where ignorance is rife, the imagination is active. Intelligent and otherwise well-informed writers soberly discuss possible developments, which have no relation to real people, but to races having all manner of fictitious characteristics. Unfortunately, also, the ignorance respecting other countries keeps alive that of one's own. A nation can truly know itself, only by knowing others; for it is only by comparison that any sound or lasting standard can be formed.

A keen sense of the virtues of the race to which he belongs comes to the child with his earliest impressions. He grows up in the belief in its innate excellence. If his race is not powerful or great, it is because of the rapacity of other races more barbarous or designing; if it is powerful or great, it is clearly the will of Providence that it should pay an increasing disregard to the feelings of smaller races. That all the means for the acquisition of knowledge are present does not further matters in the least; the machinery may as easily be employed for the propagation of every form of error and prejudice. It is only with extreme slowness that the individual comes to recognise the admirable qualities possessed by other races than that to which he belongs; it is rare indeed that he surrenders the belief that it possesses the largest share of the virtues of humanity.

This racial ignorance is blocking the march of civilisation. What manner of people are these against whom each country is closing the doors of its national life and thought? What do we really know of those whose lives, at the cost of incalculable treasure, we are ceaselessly planning to take. We

know, alas! a good deal of the governments; we know still more of the press; and of a small number of prominent and great men. But of the people themselves, the people who are the real sufferers through all forms of racial enmity, we know absurdly little. Hence the people of all countries are led into the mistake of deducing the character of the foreigner from particular cases, of generalising the inhabitants of a great nation—nearly always composed of several sub-races, differing most widely among themselves—from the people of a particular city or district; of accepting without question the brilliant word-pictures of obviously biased writers.

In spite of the periodical outbursts with which we are familiar, there is really no evidence to prove that between the different people themselves there exists anything akin to mortal hatred. Probably the most that could be established would be a settled dislike of foreigners and foreign ways. Assuming that this is based upon actual knowledge, the explanation cannot lie much deeper than the conservatism natural to groups of people, accustomed for many generations to certain habits of thought and conduct. In this sense the dislike of the foreigner will probably endure as long as national character. But dislike founded upon a constitutional preference is one thing, hatred is another. In order to express one's dislike of people, it is not necessary to shoot them. It is here suggested, as a reasonable hypothesis, that the antipathy existing between the more civilised people at the present day does not normally go beyond this. They wish to live their lives in their own way unmolested, and they have no wish to molest others. If this assumption be even approximately correct, it follows that a general knowledge of it would go far to neutralize the influence of those forces, personal and impersonal, whose interest it is to emphasise the differences that exist.

The remarkable extent to which the bias of patriotism is unconscious is one of the greatest difficulties in the way of its removal. Modesty in the individual is already beginning to be regarded as a quaint and antique virtue; modesty in a

nation seems to have become almost extinct. Where everyone is proclaiming his superiority, he who shouts the loudest has the best chance of being heard. Accordingly to each it appears perfectly natural that the virtues of his own country should be duly extolled, and the shortcomings of others placed in due relief. To those accustomed to the weighing of evidence it is astonishing what can be absorbed in this way, apparently without exciting the least suspicion that anything is wrong. When, under the influence of patriotic fervor it is felt that the bounds of truth and fairness really are being overstepped, the protests are usually of the mildest form, coupled with an expression of belief in the "good intentions" of the author. If the sense of proportion is not quite rudimentary there is, in these manifestations of bias a strong element of the ridiculous, but unfortunately the process does not end thus lightly. The forces which are dependent upon the support of public opinion are not slow to take advantage of this feature of national character. *Les absents ont toujours tort.* From the platform or in the senate, an orator may always rely upon striking in many places a sympathetic note when painting the foreigner in dark colours.

Still more striking is the case of the press, for popular favor is here the one absolute essential. At times of crisis the temptations of the press to give the people what they want, are, indeed, well-nigh irresistible. It is to be feared that few make allowance for this, or recognise the great sacrifice incurred by the adoption of a more moderate tone. Even under ordinary conditions, the press of the various countries seems ever on the alert to "score off" the little ways of the foreigner. There is a serious side to all this. With the growth of the national sentiment, there seems to be an increase of the national sensitiveness to criticism. The little pleasantries and sharp reflections at the expense of other countries are, no doubt, chiefly intended for home consumption, but their influence cannot now be so restricted. The people concerned see the matter in a different light. Much of the feeling thus expressed is duly recorded as evi-

dence of ill-will, and when the relations of the countries become strained, go to swell the hundred misunderstandings that make for war, with all the attendant suffering and demoralisation, both to victors and vanquished, that war brings in its train.

Of course if the disputes between nations could be settled in the same way as those between individuals, that is on a basis of law and equity, the more or less permanent dislike of foreigners would have far less significance; but owing to the anomalous conditions already referred to, which allow international ethics to remain centuries behind the ethics recognised within the states themselves, this racial antipathy becomes one of the gravest features of our civilisation.

Considering the issues at stake, considering how vitally the happiness of millions of human beings depends upon international friendliness, it seems strange that no systematic attempt is made to diffuse a clearer knowledge of national thought and character. What seems to be needed is more men of the type of Mr. Hammerton, who did so much to make the real France known to English-speaking people. For such work the "smart" journalist is entirely out of place. We require sober writers with long experience of different parts of the country of which they speak, and of all the grades of society, men who are able to give a truthful account of what the people are really thinking and doing, and what is the true state of their knowledge regarding the country to which the enquirer belongs. The better class of reviews and periodicals of all countries should be more readily thrown open to foreign writers, not politicians or diplomatists, but men able to present subjects of current interest from the point of view of their race, men of sufficient imagination and breadth of view to make allowance for racial prejudice and susceptibility. Where sufficient command of the language had been obtained, still greater good would result from frequent visits of such men, charged with a mission to remove existing misunderstandings, and discover points of common interest and agreement. Under such conditions, the absurd sensitiveness to foreign criticism, which so often sees an insult

in every unfavourable comment, would tend to disappear. With greater knowledge, with a surer conviction of honesty of intention, there would arise a wider toleration, a desire to profit by the right suggestion, irrespective of its origin; there would be formed a body of sound opinion of immense service to the nation in preventing hasty and ill-considered action.

VI.

We arrive finally at the stage in our enquiry at which we recognise that the question of the bias of patriotism is ultimately one of ideals. Is it to the advantage, to the ultimate as well as the immediate good, of a people, that it should be more wrapped up in itself, more exclusively mindful of its own feelings, interests, institutions? Or is it to its ultimate good to become keenly alive to the fact that there are other peoples who, on closer acquaintance, may also be found to be interesting; peoples who in all the more fundamental concerns of life have the same feelings, who also have their ideas equally characteristic, their long experience equally valuable, their traditions equally cherished? All the charges of anti-patriotism are traceable to an imperfect appreciation of the importance of some such questions as these; there is always the implication that certain immediate and palpable interests of a particular country are necessarily its most vital interests, and that to be opposed to these is to be deficient in patriotic feeling.

Admitting for a moment that it were desirable for each country to foster every form of national idiosyncrasy, that everything foreign being more or less objectionable, it were better that this influence should decrease, that each country should become more and more in the fullest sense, self-contained. However desirable such a state might be, it is no longer possible. In a sense quite peculiar to the development of the last half century, *the foreigner has come to stay*. Whether they like it or not, for an indefinitely lengthy period, the people at present constituting the great nations of the world are to be, in an ever fuller sense, neighbors. Through commerce, through politics, through literature, the

sense of actual contact will become keener. This is amongst the few absolute certainties of the future. Therefore, even on this ground, is it not in the highest degree unwise to accentuate the differences that exist? Proximity without sympathy is intolerable. Under such conditions, the national life is embittered; there is an ever-present source of unrest. Foreign influence being now a permanent factor in the daily existence of each country, it is obviously to the interest of the people to mould it to their needs. Friction in this case means the dissipation of an indefinite amount of moral and intellectual energy.

But if it were possible for the nations to be isolated and self-sufficient, it is to a last degree undesirable. The analogy of the individual holds with striking force: it is no more good for a nation, than for a man, to live alone. Isolation and stagnation are closely allied. It is not only to the interest of humanity at large, but to the interest of each of the races, that they should be more and more mutually dependent, more and more bound to each other by all the ties that help towards fellowship. The tendency of political ideals to dominate the whole field of national thought and character is pernicious. To this we trace the notion that the highest national interests are founded upon mutual antagonisms, that the gain of one people is necessarily the loss of another. Prosperity on this view is a limited store from which each nation draws at the expense of the rest. Except in the restricted sphere of physical force and its abuse this is a pure fiction. Except in the grossest and most material sense, no people can ultimately profit by needless suffering or injury inflicted on another. The sources of energy upon which national prosperity, in the best sense, depends, are inexhaustible. The drafts of each nation, so far from depriving others of their share, act as a direct cause on their part, of similar renewals of strength. It is not to the disadvantage, but enormously to the advantage of nations, to have as neighbors powerful people, fertile in resource, with essentially different ways of thought, and eager to exchange no less their ideas than their goods.

The conception of humanity as an organism offers sound guidance in estimating the forces which make for true development. In proportion as the organism is low in the scale of life, its parts are independent, their injury is not serious to the individual, the organs being readily repaired or renewed. With each advance in complexity, the welfare of the parts becomes more and more necessary to the well-being of the whole. The same is true of nations; from the unsettled life of the nomad with its few needs, perfect self-sufficiency, and utter ignorance of or indifference to the life of other peoples, to the highly civilised life of modern races, with its multifarious needs, material and spiritual, satisfied from every part of the globe, and its vital interest in the welfare of even small and remote communities.

It is hardly necessary to dwell on the fact that imperiousness, or indifference to foreign influence, cramps the life and thought of a people. In numberless ways, this bias conceals the results of discovery, and prevents the diffusion of ideas. The growing complexity of the problems of individual and social life has called into existence an army of thinkers in every civilised country. Subdivision and specialisation goes on apace, and the national genius of many peoples is attacking these problems, each in its own way. The best that humanity can produce may be acquired only by a comparison of these results. It is surely absurd that any considerations of geography, or language, or race, should limit the benefits to be derived from the highest culture of the time. It is only thus that the highest type can be evolved. The race which is the most assimilative of the best thought of other races, will be the best able to develop its own. Other things being equal, it will be the more vigorous, the better fitted for every phase of the struggle for existence.

The fear that the national character would thus be in danger of disappearing in a formless cosmopolitanism is, of course, quite groundless. The only features of it likely to disappear would be those based on narrow prejudice, and unreasoning custom—the concrete expression of ideas that

are dead. As the individual personalises his knowledge into a characteristic whole, so the genius of the race is expressed in its institutions, its literature, and its conduct. Knowledge is great, but the mystery of personality, individual and national, must ever assert itself.

On the purely moral side, the claims of an ideal of closer union between nations are incomparably strong. If, on the one hand, it is necessary that we should be on our guard lest the lofty conception of human brotherhood blind us to the innate differences that must always exist, it seems equally necessary on the other, to decline to accept the view that all the existing evils are based upon an inexorable and unchangeable "human nature." Human nature represents something so profoundly complex, that any dogmatism regarding it, beyond the merest essentials, offers an easy method of begging the whole question. On such grounds, every weakness or vice may be excused or in a measure justified, for there is hardly an attribute of human nature which does not vary within the widest limits, according to time and place. To say that enmity is stronger than amity, is to ignore the most obvious lesson of the history of society. It is one thing to admit that, so far as we are able to perceive, disagreements must ever characterise human intercourse; it is quite another to believe that reconciliation or settlement must always be brought about by the primitive method of purely physical force. To argue thus shows an absurdly weak faith in those fundamental instincts of human nature, upon the strength of which its development depends.

The plain truth is that those responsible for national conduct have never given to the question of a possible union of races through the cultivation of their sympathies, the attention it deserves. They have accepted as a matter of course the evidence of hostility; of the evidence of friendship, they have been sceptical. This represents incalculable injury to the cause of humanity. With the way in which ill-feeling begets ill-feeling, each country apparently striving to surpass the other, we are, unfortunately, too familiar. We are apt to forget that good-feeling is equally cumulative.

The *rapprochement* now happily existing between England and France, is but a faint indication of what may be done when nations are really in earnest in the cause of peace.

It would seem to devolve upon all interested in the progress of the higher culture, to protest against the assertion of any patriotism which does not take advantage of the best influences exerted by humanity at large. Any patriotism which regards the interests of a people as questions solely of physical power, or territory, or trade, is narrow and confining. Important as such interests are, and demanding as they do sagacity of a high order, they are, on a final analysis, but a means to an end. The ultimate mission of an advanced people should be the cultivation of a national character which is strong, worthy, and resourceful, and the patriotism, however blatantly proclaimed, which is opposed to this, is false and misleading.

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